

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5681

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: CALL ON NEW MINISTER OF LABOR

REF: MADRID 5136

1. I CALLED JULY 28, ACCOMPANIED BY THE LABOR ATTACHE, ON THE NEW MINISTER OF LABOR, MANUEL JIMENEZ DE PARGA. I WAS RECEIVED WITH CONSIDERABLE WARMTH AND THE MINISTER WAS MOST FORTHCOMING IN HIS REMARKS, THE HIGHLIGHTS OF WHICH ARE REPORTED BELOW.

2. RELATIONS WITH U.S. TRADE UNIONS. JIMENEZ DE PARGA REPEATED A VIEW EXPRESSED TO US EARLIER (REFTEL) THAT HE BELIEVES THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT CERTAINLY HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN ASSISTING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EMERGING FREE TRADE UNIONS IN SPAIN. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY OF MENTIONING THE COMING VISIT OF ERNEST LEE (DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AFL-CIO) AUGUST 1-5, NOTING THAT HE WOULD BE MEETING WITH UGT SECGEN NICOLAS REDONDO IN MADRID AND WITH THE BASQUE STV IN SAN SEBASTIAN. THE MINISTER, AWARE THAT THE EMBASSY HAD ALREADY ASKED FOR AN APPOINTMENT, SAID THAT HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO TALKING TO MR. LEE ON AUGUST 2.

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3. SPANISH TRADE UNIONS. JIMENEZ DE PARGA CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD ALREADY HAD A NUMBER OF MEETINGS WITH VARIOUS UNIONS INCLUDING THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS (SWC) AND THE SOCIALIST UGT, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING THE GOVT'S ECONOMIC MEASURES (MADRID 5632). HE WAS OPTIMISTIC THAT SPANISH LABOR WOULD COOPERATE, AND SAID THAT THE LANGUAGE THEY USED IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH

HIM WAS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE MORE ANTAGONISTIC PUBLIC STATEMENTS ISSUED BY THE UNIONS. HE NOTED IN PASSING THAT HE HAD MANY FRIENDS AMONG THE TRADE UNIONS., HAVING SERVED SOME OF THEM AS A LABOR LAWYER IN BARCELONA.

4. THE UGT. HE OBSERVED THAT THE UGT WAS REALLY FEELING ITS OATS AS A RESULT OF THE PSOE'S STRONG SHOWING IN THE ELECTIONS, AND SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO PLAY A SOMEWHAT RADICAL ROLE IN THE SOCIALIST CAMP, LEAVING IT TO FELIPE GONZALEZ TO PLAY A MORE MODERATE ROLE IN THE CORTES. IN ANY EVENT, HE SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE MOST USEFUL IF MR. LEE COULD FIND THE OCCASION IN HIS TALK WITH REDONDO, TO COUNSEL A POSTURE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND MODERATION. WITH RESPECT TO THE PARTRIMONY EVENTUALLY DUE THE UGT FROM PROPERTIES CONFISCATED AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, IT WAS UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION BUT WOULD ULTIMATELY INVOLVE A POLITICAL DECISION. THE MATTER OF THE PENDING DGB DM 10 MILLION LOAN TO THE GUT (ON WHICH HE HAD BEEN BRIEFED BY SUAREZ)

-- NOW PUBLIC INFORMATION (SEPTTEL) -- ALSO FELL IN THE CATEGORY OF SOMETHING REQUIRING A POLITICAL DECISION (PRESUMABLY, WE WOULD COMMENT, AT THE SUAREZ LEVEL).

5. SPANISH EMPLOYERS. JIMENEZ DE PARGA NOTED THAT HE HAD ALSO BEEN CONSULTING WITH THE EMPLOYERS REGARDING THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROGRAM. HE SAID HE HAD TOLD THEM CONFIDENTIAL

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QUITE FRANKLY THAT SPANISH CAPITALISM MUST ADAPT ITSELF TO THE U.S. AND WESTERN EUROPEAN MODELS. THE TIME WAS PAST WHEN IT COULD IN EFFECT BE A LAW UNTO ITSELF. MANAGEMENT MUST GIVE OUT MORE INFORMATION, FOR BOTH STOCKHOLDERS AND WORKERS HAD A RIGHT TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON. (COMMENT: JIMENEZ DE PARGA IS UNDER PUBLIC ATTACK BY THE EMPLOYERS FOR HIS STATEMENTS. CERTAIN OF THE MORE CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF THE GOVT ARE ALSO CRITICIZING HIM PRIVATELY FOR WHAT THEY CALL HIS "DEMAGOGIC" STATEMENTS AND HIS TENDENCY TO MAEK TOO MANY "CONCESSIONS" TO THE LABOR UNIONS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AT TODAY'S COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' MEETING, SUAREZ WILL REMIND MINISTERS THAT POLICY STATEMENTS WILL ONLY BE MADE BY HIM AND THAT THERE IS TO BE NO FREE-WHEELING ON THESE SENSITIVE ISSUES.) STABLER

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